



D.C. statehood facing long odds in the Senate



In this March 22, 2021, file photo advocates for statehood for the District of Columbia rally near the Supreme Court and Capitol prior to a House of Representatives hearing on creating a fifty-first state, in Washington.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Proponents of statehood for Washington, D.C., vowed Tuesday to keep pushing even though the prospects were dim as the bill began working its way through the Senate.

"Our democracy is truly in the hands of this Senate," Mayor Muriel Bowser told the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. "We will not quit until we achieve full democracy. ... We will keep pushing until D.C.'s tragic disenfranchisement is rectified." In Tuesday's hearings on a bill that would make Washington, D.C., the 51st state, Democrats framed it as a long-standing injustice finally being made right. The nation's capital has a larger population than Wyoming or Vermont, and its estimated 712,000 residents pay federal taxes, vote for president and serve in the armed forces, but they have no voting representation in Congress.

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Continued from Front

Republicans, however, dismissed the bill as a cynical Democratic power play since the District votes solidly Democratic. They claim statehood was never the intention of the Founding Fathers and insist that Congress doesn't even have the power to change D.C.'s status.

"What Congress cannot do is override the Constitution anytime it becomes inconvenient for a majority in Congress," said Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri. "The Constitution endures and that is the fundamental premise of our Democratic republic, and I fear that premise is being threatened by this legislation."

The bill proposes creating a 51st state with one representative and two senators, while a tiny sliver of land including the White House, the U.S. Capitol and the National Mall would remain as a federal district.

Instead of the District of Columbia, the new state would be known as Washington, Douglass Commonwealth — named after famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who lived in Washington from 1877 until



In this March 22, 2021, file photo Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser, testifies at the House Oversight and Reform Committee hearing, on D.C. statehood on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

his death in 1895.

The bill comes as D.C. statehood is receiving unprecedented levels of popular and political support. It received a formal endorsement from the White House, which called Washington's current status "an affront to the democratic values on which our Nation

was founded."

The effort has also become intertwined with America's ascendant racial justice movement, with progressive activists framing it as an issue of civil rights and political enfranchisement. The proposed state would be approximately 46% Black.

An identical statehood bill passed the House in 2020 but died in the then-Republican-controlled Senate. Now, with the 2020 elections leaving Democrats in control of both chambers of Congress and the White House, statehood advocates had hoped for a different outcome.

This version of the legislation passed the House in April by a 216-208 vote along party lines, but the Senate is a long shot. The Senate is split 50-50 with Vice President Kamala Harris as the tie-breaker. Not long after the House vote, however, Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia essentially blunted whatever momentum that statehood had gathered by saying he opposed pursuing it through an act of Congress.

Even with Manchin's support the measure would have been vulnerable to a Republican filibuster. Barring a dramatic reversal by Manchin or unexpected defection by a Republican, the measure appears stalled.

And moderate Republicans like Maine Sen. Susan Collins are already on re-

cord saying they oppose D.C. statehood.

D.C. has long chafed under its relationship with Congress, which essentially has the power to veto or alter any local laws. The limitations were put in stark relief last summer during a series of protests over the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and against general police brutality. After a night of widespread vandalism, President Donald Trump went around Bowser and called in a large federal force to restore order downtown.

On Jan. 6, when a mob of Trump supporters physically overwhelmed U.S. Capitol Police and invaded the Capitol building, Bowser did not have the authority of a governor to call in the National Guard. Instead, that request went to the upper levels of the Pentagon and there was a notable delay in the Guard deployment while dozens of D.C. police officers rushed into the building as reinforcements. Bowser at the time quickly pointed out the ironies of Washington residents risking their lives to defend a Congress where they didn't have a vote. □

15 GOP governors urge release of Census redistricting data



In this May 5, 2021, file photo Vice President Kamala Harris, left, and Secretary of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo participate in a roundtable with women-led small business owners in Providence, R.I.

Associated Press

By ADRIAN SAINZ
Associated Press

Fifteen Republican governors sent a letter Tuesday to the U.S. Department of Commerce urging that the U.S. Census Bureau release redistricting data as soon as possible, saying further delays would hurt efforts to redraw congressional and legislative districts.

The letter addressed to Commerce Secretary Gina M. Raimondo said the governors recognize the difficulties associated with completing the decennial Census during the coronavirus pandemic, which

has postponed release of redistricting data until mid-August.

But the letter also said the ongoing delay puts states "in a nearly impossible situation to redraw lines prior to the 2022 election cycle" in U.S. House and state legislative districts.

The governors asked that redistricting data be released this month or as soon as possible.

"Further delaying the release of redistricting data negatively impacts redistricting efforts nationwide, places state governments in an unnecessarily precari-

ous position, and presents compounding delays in operations at every level of government," said the letter to Raimondo, an appointee of Democratic President Joe Biden.

The Census is completed every 10 years and is essential for determining population numbers and other key demographics. Census data is used for redrawing congressional and legislative districts, determining how many congressional seats each state gets, and deciding how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed each year. □

Biden urges shots for young adults as variant concern grows

By **ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government is stepping up efforts to get younger Americans vaccinated for COVID-19 as the White House acknowledges it will miss two key vaccination benchmarks and as concern grows about the spread of a new variant that threatens to set the country back in the months ahead.

The delta variant, first identified in India, in the last two weeks has come to represent more than 20% of coronavirus infections in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Tuesday. That's double what it was when the CDC last reported on the variant's prevalence.

"The delta variant is currently the greatest threat in the U.S. to our attempt to eliminate COVID-19," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said at a White House briefing on the virus. "Good news: Our vaccines are effective against the delta variant."

He added: "We have the tools. So let's use them, and crush the outbreak."

The White House on Tuesday acknowledged that President Joe Biden will fall short of reaching his goal of vaccinating 70% of all American adults with at least one shot by Independence Day. But it tried to paint an optimistic picture nonetheless by stressing that the nation had reached that threshold for those aged 30 and older and expects to meet it for those age 27 or older by the July 4 holiday.

Biden also expects to miss a second goal — fully vaccinating 165 million adult Americans by July 4. White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients projected it will take several more weeks to hit that number. On Monday, the U.S. crossed 150 million fully vaccinated.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki rejected the idea that the missed July 4 benchmarks would repre-

sent a failure for the administration, telling reporters, "We don't see it exactly like something went wrong."

Still, administration officials said they were redoubling their focus on vaccinating younger Americans age 18-26, who have proved to be least likely to get a vaccine when it's available for them.

The nationwide rate of new vaccinations has dropped off precipitously over the past month even as shots have become more available, with fewer than 300,000 Americans now getting their first dose per day on average — a pace that, if sustained, will have the U.S. not reaching Biden's 70% goal until late July at the earliest.

Officials are also increasingly concerned about regional variations in the vaccination program.

More than 16 states and the District of Columbia have vaccinated 70% of their adult population. But others — particularly in the South and Midwest — are lagging substantially behind, with four not having yet reached 50% vaccination rates.

The White House said meeting Biden's vaccination goals is less important than the pace of the nation's reopening, which is exceeding even its own internal projections as the overwhelming majority of the nation's most vulnerable people are fully vaccinated and cases and deaths are at their lowest rates since the earliest days of the pandemic, averaging about 11,000 new infections and fewer than 300 deaths per day. More states are opening back up, with Michigan on Tuesday becoming the latest to do away with a mask mandate and virus restrictions. The state had the nation's worst outbreak this spring.

"We have succeeded beyond our highest expectations," Zeints said.

Americans at highest risk for complications from COVID-19 are overwhelmingly vaccinated, according to CDC data, but only 53% aged 25-39 have received



In this June 18, 2021 file photo, President Joe Biden speaks about COVID-19 vaccination shots, in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

one dose. Among those 18-24, it's 47%.

"Where the country has more work to do is particularly with 18 to 26 year olds," Zients said.

Zients and government experts said the rise of the delta variant should motivate younger Americans to get vaccinated.

"The reality is many young-

er Americans have felt like COVID-19 is not something that impacts them, and they've been less eager to get the shot," Zients said. "However, with the delta variant now spreading across the country, and infecting younger people worldwide, it's more important than ever that they get vaccinated."

The variant is taking root as there are warning signs about a possible surge in cases in unvaccinated corners of America. Rural sections of Missouri, including Springfield and Branson, have seen a dramatic spike in COVID-19 hospitalizations in recent weeks that health officials attribute in part to the delta variant spreading among younger, unvaccinated residents. □



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Background checks blocked a record high 300,000 gun sales

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST
SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The number of people stopped from buying guns through the U.S. background check system hit an all-time high of more than 300,000 last year amid a surge of firearm sales, according to new records obtained by the group Everytown for Gun Safety.

The FBI numbers provided to The Associated Press show the background checks blocked nearly twice as many gun sales in 2020 as in the year before. About 42% of those denials were because the would-be buyers had felony convictions on their records. The increase in blocked gun sales largely tracks with the record-setting surge in sales that took hold along with the coronavirus pandemic and has continued into this year, through historic demonstrations against police brutality, deep political divisions and an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

It comes as Congress has failed to pass major legislation on guns despite the Democratic majority and President Joe Biden's push. A bill that would strengthen background checks is stalled in the Senate. The House in March passed the legislation requiring the checks on all sales and transfers, as well as an expanded 10-day review for gun purchases. Most



In this March 25, 2020, file photo semi-automatic handguns are displayed at shop in New Castle, Pa.

Associated Press

states require background checks only for sales at federally licensed dealers. But the legislation faces an uphill battle getting any Republican support in the Senate.

According to the data, the rate of barred would-be gun buyers also increased somewhat over the previous two years, from about 0.6% to 0.8%. That could be in part because many of the people who tried to get guns in 2020 were buying them for the first time and may not have been aware that they were legally barred from owning

them, said Adam Winkler, a UCLA Law professor specializing in gun policy.

"Some may have a felony conviction on their record and not think about it," he said.

Making a false statement in connection with a background check is a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a hefty fine, but few people are prosecuted for what would amount to lying on the form filled out before a gun purchase, he said.

In 2017, just 12 of the 112,000 people denied a gun purchase, about

0.01%, were federally prosecuted, largely due to limited resources for the time-intensive investigations, according to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report.

Everytown's research found that 16% of would-be gun buyers in 2020 were prohibited by state law, like the extreme-risk protection orders or red-flag laws passed in several states. Another 12% were related to domestic violence, either people subject to a protective order or convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence crime.

The data shows how necessary the legislation is, said Sarah Burd-Sharps, Everytown's director of research. "There's no question that background checks work, but the system is working overtime to prevent a record number of people with dangerous prohibitors from being able to buy firearms," she said in a statement. "The loopholes in the law allow people to avoid the system, even if they just meet online or at a gun show for the first time."

Gun rights groups have pushed back against the proposal, and Alan Gottlieb, founder of the group the Second Amendment Foundation, said the increase in denials might be partly because more states have been updating their records of restricted people. There are sometimes false positives as well, he said. "A day doesn't go by that our office doesn't get complaint calls from people who've been denied wrongly," he said.

The data also comes as a growing number of conservative-leaning states drop requirements for people to get background checks and training to carry guns in public.

Texas last week became the latest state of about 20 to drop permitting requirements amid a push that began gathering steam several years ago. □

Sons of Confederate Veterans sue to return Georgia monument



Workers remove a Confederate monument with a crane Thursday, June 18, 2020, in Decatur, Ga.

Associated Press

DECATUR, Ga. (AP) — The Sons of Confederate Veterans group has sued to return a 30-foot-high (9-me-

ter) obelisk to a site in front of a Georgia courthouse. The monument was taken down and moved to stor-

age last year after a judge in Decatur agreed with the city's argument that it had become a threat to public safety during protests about racism and police brutality.

The suit was filed Wednesday, two days short of a year after the monument's removal, news outlets reported.

The group suggests that city officials colluded to get around a state law protecting historic monuments, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

It contends that the monument was not found to be a public nuisance.

DeKalb County Judge Clarence Seeliger's ruling last year said it had become "an increasingly frequent target of graffiti and vandalism, a figurative lightning rod for friction among citizens, and a potential catastrophe that could happen at any time if individuals attempt to forcibly remove or destroy it."

His final order, in September, said the obelisk should never be returned to the square.

"The world is full of controversy. And if we were to say anything that causes controversy is a public nuisance, that's an endless

road to go down," attorney Walker Chandler, who filed the lawsuit, told WXIA-TV.

In an email to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Decatur City Attorney Bryan Downs called the suit a "tardy, vexatious attack on properly entered rulings by a Georgia court of law."

He said the group had more than three months to try to intervene before Seeliger's final order but did nothing.

"The Petition they have now filed is factually incorrect, legally flawed, and procedurally deficient," Downs wrote. "In short, it is a lost cause." □

Kim sister derides U.S. official, dismisses chances for talks

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed prospects for an early resumption of diplomacy with the United States, saying Tuesday that U.S. expectations of talks would “plunge them into a greater disappointment.” Kim Yo Jong’s blunt statement indicates that the diplomatic impasse over North Korea’s nuclear program is likely to continue unless the North suffers greater pandemic-related economic difficulties and needs urgent outside assistance, some experts said.

Hope for a restart of nuclear talks flared briefly after Kim Jong Un said last week that his country must be ready for both dialogue and confrontation, though more for confrontation. U.S. National Security adviser Jake Sullivan called Kim’s comments an “interesting signal.”

On Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong derided Sullivan’s response. “It seems that the U.S. may interpret the situation in such a way as to seek a comfort for itself,” the official Korean Central News Agency quoted her as saying. “The expectation, which they chose to harbor the wrong way, would plunge them into a greater disappointment.”



In this Feb. 10, 2018, file photo, Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, waits for the start of the preliminary round of the women’s hockey game between Switzerland and the combined Koreas at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Gangneung, South Korea.

Associated Press

Shin Beomchul, an analyst with the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said North Korea has been communicating the same message for months that it has no intention to return to talks unless the United States offers meaningful concessions, likely in the form of eased economic sanctions. The Biden administration, for its part, doesn’t want to budge either, he said.

“Both parties are locked in a waiting game. North Korea wants the United States to make concessions first, and the United States has

no intentions to match a level of action the North is demanding,” Shin said.

On Monday, during a visit to Seoul, Sung Kim, the top U.S. envoy on North Korea affairs, said Washington is willing to meet the North “anywhere, anytime without preconditions.” But he stressed that the Biden administration would continue to pressure North Korea with sanctions over its nuclear and missile ambitions. Just before Kim Yo Jong’s statement was released on Tuesday, Sung Kim met South Korean Unification Minister Lee In-young and

said Washington and Seoul remain committed to seeking the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy. Lee said he hoped North Korea would return to the negotiating table at an early date and called the current situation “a very good chance” to resume talks.

Sung Kim later met South Korean President Moon Jae-in, and the two said they would strive to resume U.S.-North Korea talks, Moon’s office said. The South Korean government didn’t immediately

comment on Kim Yo Jong’s statement.

As a precondition for the talks’ resumption, North Korea has repeatedly called on the United States to lift its “hostile policy” toward it, an apparent reference to the U.S.-led sanctions and regular military drills with South Korea.

But experts say the Biden administration won’t ease sanctions or make other major concessions before North Korea takes concrete steps toward denuclearization.

North Korea may only ease its stance if it can no longer endure its ongoing economic hardship, some experts said. Kim Jong Un has admitted North Korea faces what he described as its “worst-ever” crises, due to drastically reduced international trade caused by pandemic-related border closings, mismanagement, the economic sanctions and crop-killing storms last year.

The deadlock “could be prolonged unless there’s a change in the conditions facing the North, such as greater economic or pandemic-related difficulties,” Shin said.

Analyst Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea said Kim Yo Jong’s statement suggested North Korea isn’t ready to rejoin talks anytime soon. □

Dutch talks on forming coalition government still deadlocked

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) —



In this Thursday, April 1, 2021 file photo, caretaker Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte listens to the debate in parliament, in The Hague, Netherlands.

Associated Press

Nearly 100 days after Dutch national election, talks to form a new

ruling coalition remain deadlocked, the official who has led weeks of negotiations said Tuesday.

The conservative People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy led by three-term Prime Minister Mark Rutte won the most seats in the three-day election that ended March 17, but the splintered result has so far prevented the formation of a new governing coalition.

The other big winner was the centrist D66 party led by caretaker Foreign Minister Sigrid Kaag. But at least four parties will have to join

forces to command a majority in the 150-seat lower house of Parliament and ideological differences between them are so far blocking progress toward the next government.

“At the moment, there is no combination possible” among six parties from across the political spectrum that have expressed readiness to be part of the next government, said Mariette Hamer, a former lawmaker leading coalition talks.

Hamer said in a report to Parliament that the stalemate “cannot be the end

of the complex political relationships” and said Rutte’s and Kaag’s parties now need to take the next step.

Hamer recommended that the two party leaders use the coming weeks to draw up a document sketching out a policy blueprint for the next government. The document can then be used for a resumption of coalition talks in mid-August.

In the absence of a new government, Rutte’s last administration has been ruling the country in caretaker mode. □

Putin hails WWII heroes, warns of degrading Europe security

By **VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV**

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday marked the 80th anniversary of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union by hailing the country's World War II heroes and calling for efforts to strengthen European security.

The Nazis invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and the country lost a staggering 27 million people in what it calls the Great Patriotic War. The enormous suffering and sacrifice have left a deep scar in the national psyche, and the Victory Day marking the end of World War II in Europe that is celebrated in Russia on May 9 is the nation's most important secular holiday.

"The day of June 22 still evokes anger and sorrow in the hearts of all generations, causing pain for the destroyed lives of millions of people," Putin said in a speech at the Unknown Soldier's Tomb at the Kremlin wall. "Those trials, those terrible years, are literally imprinted into our memory."

The invading Nazi forces quickly overran the western part of the Soviet Union and came as close as 30 kilometers (less than 19 miles) to Moscow. But the Red Army rebounded and routed the Nazis near the capi-



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a ceremony in memory of those killed during WWII as he takes part in a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of Unknown Soldier in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, June 22, 2021, marking the 80th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

Associated Press

tal, dealt them a crushing defeat in the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943 and then drove them back across Europe all the way to Berlin. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Putin on Tuesday to "express empathy with the unmeasurable woes and suffering brought by the war that was launched by the Nazi regime," the Kremlin said.

"Both parties underlined the importance of preserving the historic memory of

those tragic events" and noted that "overcoming mutual enmity and reconciliation of the Russian and German peoples had key importance for the destinies of postwar Europe," the Kremlin said. "It was emphasized that preserving security on the continent now is also possible only through joint efforts."

The Kremlin has been anxious to see international recognition of the nation's wartime sacrifices and its

role in defeating the Nazis. In an article published Tuesday in the German weekly *Die Zeit*, Putin emphasized that "despite attempts to rewrite the pages of the past that are being made today, the truth is that Soviet soldiers came to Germany not to take revenge on the Germans, but with a noble and great mission of liberation."

He hailed postwar efforts to restore mutual trust but blamed NATO's eastward

expansion to embrace former Soviet bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe and ex-Soviet Baltic republics for the deteriorating security.

"We hoped that the end of the Cold War would be a common victory for Europe," Putin said in the article. "But a different approach has prevailed based on the expansion of NATO, a relic of the Cold War. Fourteen new countries, including the former Soviet Union republics, joined the organization, effectively dashing hopes for a continent without dividing lines." Moscow saw NATO's expansion as a threat to its security, and Russia-West ties sank to post-Cold War lows after Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula that followed the ouster of the Moscow-friendly Ukrainian president.

"The whole system of European security has now degraded significantly," Putin wrote. "Tensions are rising and the risks of a new arms race are becoming real." He insisted that prosperity and security in Europe could only be achieved through joint efforts and noted that "Russia is in favour of restoring a comprehensive partnership with Europe." □

Australian prison to be evacuated after mice move in

By **ROD McGUIRK**

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)

— A plague of mice that has ravaged vast swathes of eastern Australia has forced the evacuation of a prison while authorities repair gnawed electrical wiring and clear dead and decaying mice from walls and ceilings.

Around 200 staff and 420 inmates will be transferred from the Wellington Correctional Center in rural New South Wales state to other prisons in the region during the next 10 days while cleaning and repairs take place, Corrective Services Commissioner Peter Severin said on Tuesday.

"The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and in-

mates is our No. 1 priority so it's important for us to act now to carry out the vital remediation work," Severin said. Millions of mice have caused havoc in the grain-growing region of Australia's most populous state for months, devouring crops and haystacks as well as invading homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and prisons.

The most common complaint about the plague is an ever-present stench of mice urine and decaying flesh. People report being bitten by mice in bed. Mouse carcasses and excrement in roof guttering are polluting farmers' water tanks and causing sickness. The remediation work at

the prison will include investigating ways to protect the facility from future mice plagues, which are a phenomenon largely unique to Australia.

Plagues usually happen when rain follows several years of drought. The current plague is the worst that many can remember in some areas.

Severin said the mice infestation was worst in prison buildings that weren't built from concrete.

"The mice have got into ... wall cavities, into roof spaces. They're dead but then they start obviously decaying and then the next problem is mites," Severin told Australian Broadcasting Corp.



In this May 19, 2021, file photo, mice scurry around stored grain on a farm near Tottenham, Australia.

Associated Press

Government mouse researcher Steve Henry said mice numbers had begun to plateau as the species always stops breeding

during the Southern Hemisphere winter.

But numbers could explode again if conditions are right in the spring. □


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China, Canada spar at U.N. body over human rights failings

GENEVA (AP) — Canada and 40 other countries on Tuesday urged China to allow “immediate, meaningful and unfettered access” so independent observers can visit its western Xinjiang region, while a Chinese envoy demanded that Canadian authorities “stop violations of human rights” at home.

The mutual finger-pointing, which preceded admissions from Canada's envoy about shortcomings in her country's rights record, came in a debate at the Human Rights Council, the U.N.'s top human rights body.

The showdown in the largely virtual council session exposed an ongoing rift between the West and allies of China, which has been



Zachary Orchard, of the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation on the Manitoba and Ontario border, poses for a photograph while attending a ceremony and vigil for the 215 children whose remains were found buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, in Vancouver, British Columbia, on National Indigenous Peoples Day, Monday, June 21, 2021.

Associated Press

increasingly pushing back against the criticism of its human rights record.

Chinese envoy Jiang Duan inveighed against Canada's past mistreatment of

Indigenous peoples and the recent discovery of the remains of more than 200 children at an Indigenous boarding school in Canada. He called for a “thor-

ough and impartial investigation” into cases of crimes against Indigenous peoples and faulted racism and xenophobia in Canada.

“We urge Canada to immediately stop violations of human rights,” he said, adding that U.N. bodies should “keep following the human rights issues in Canada.”

“Canada has also repeatedly used human rights as an instrument to promote its political agenda,” Jiang said.

Canada presented a statement from 41 mostly Western countries that echoed widespread concerns among human rights groups about detention centers in Xinjiang, where hundreds of thousands of Muslim Uyghurs and other

minorities have been held. “We urge China to allow immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including the High Commissioner,” Canadian ambassador Leslie Norton said, referring to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

Bachelet's office has been trying since the start of her tenure in 2018 to arrange a visit to Xinjiang and she said Monday she hoped to carry one out by year's end.

The statement from Norton also called for an end to “the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minorities,” and also expressed concerns about human rights in Hong Kong and Tibet. □

Newly sanctified Tunisian cemetery for migrants filling fast

By MEHDI AL-AREM and LORI HINNANT

ZARZIS, Tunisia (AP) — Most of the headstones have dates but no names. Row after row of palest white, practically gleaming in the Mediterranean sun.

The cemetery in Zarzis is nearly exactly as Rachid Koraichi pictured it when he sketched

his vision of the “Garden of Africa” that would be the final resting place for hundreds of anonymous men, women and children whose bodies have washed up on the shores of this coastal Tunisian city in recent years.

For him, it was a duty “to make a burial ground, one with presence and intelligence,

so that one day the families, the fathers, the mothers, the tribes and the countries know that their children are in a heavenly place, the first step to heaven,” Koraichi told The Associated Press.

Zarzis is a port city where migrants bound for Europe frequently wind up after their boats go astray in the Mediterranean's uncertain currents. One of its cemeteries is already filled with those who died trying to make the crossing. Zarzis residents refused to bury migrants in the local Muslim cemeteries.

So Koraichi decided that the newly dead needed their own burial ground and he bought a plot of land in honor of his brother, who himself drowned in the Mediterranean while trying to migrate to Europe. “They died in the same waters, they died in the same sea and were taken by the same salt,” he said. □



The cemetery for migrants who have died trying to reach Europe, in the village of Zarzis, Tunisia, Saturday June 12, 2021. A newly sanctified cemetery for Tunisia's migrant dead is filling quickly.

Associated Press




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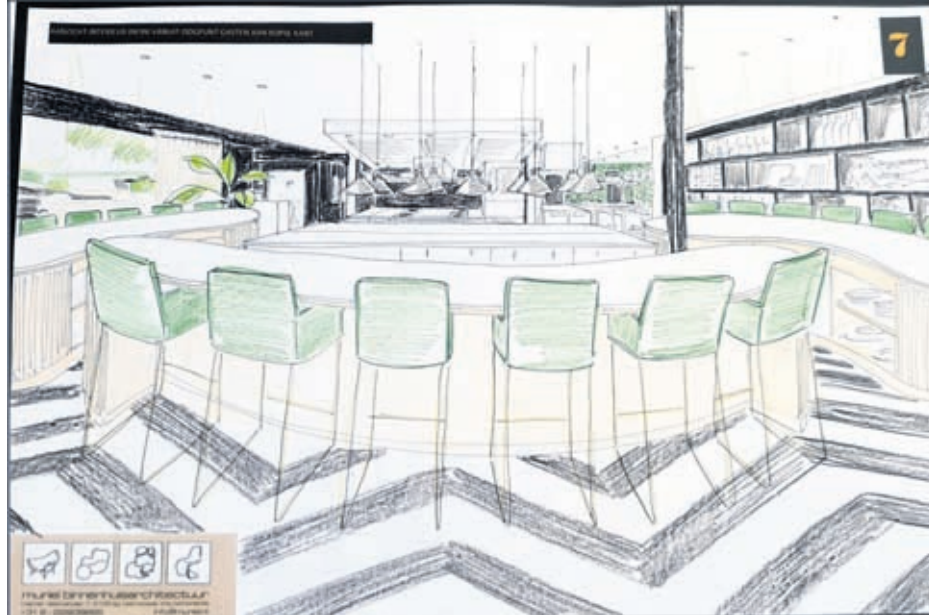
New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

PALM BEACH — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on Tripadvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pes-



catarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

"Without a great team, there is no great chef"

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently re-



turned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously



managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit www.infiniaruba.com or call +297-699-3982 ☐



infini
by Urvin Croes



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As part of the airport's corporate strategy to be the most sustainable airport in the region:
AUA Airport receives Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 2

ORANJESTAD – Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA), company that manages and operates Queen Beatrix International Airport (AUA Airport), with the ambition to be the most sustainable airport in the region, proudly announces its latest achievement, the Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 2.

AUA Airport entered the Airports Council International's (ACI) Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program back in 2018 and has since taken numerous actions in favor of the environment. ACA is the only global, airport-specific program that certifies airports'

efforts to manage and reduce its carbon emissions. It is the ideal program for the Airport to support Aruba to become inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable while taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, according to goals #11 and #13 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

By achieving the Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 2, the so called "Reduction level" ACA highlights AUA Airport's efforts to measure, manage and reduce its carbon footprint. The actions taken to measure, manage and reduce its carbon footprint include the replacement of all lights

with LED lighting, the placement of electrical timers in and around the airport terminal and the introduction of more efficient air conditioning equipment, amongst other efforts.

"As part of the corporate strategy, which is being developed together with all AAA employees, the team at AUA Airport is very dedicated towards the reduction of the airport's carbon footprint. Despite the obvious effects of 2020, the team continued pursuing our efforts in mitigation of our carbon footprint. Level 2 means that we are on the right path and provides the confidence to achieve the next levels of the inter-

nationally recognized accreditation together with our service providers at the airport. We are happy, honored and proud to obtain this new accreditation and I can guarantee that the team will continue to be as committed and dedicated moving forward," said Jurgen Benschop, COO at AAA.

Airport Carbon Accreditation is the only institutionally endorsed, global carbon management certification program for airports and independently assesses and recognizes the efforts of airports to manage and reduce their carbon emissions through 6 levels of certification: 'Mapping',

'Reduction', 'Optimization', 'Neutrality', 'Transformation' and 'Transition'.

Thanks to the Airport Carbon Accreditation program AUA Airport can contribute directly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) as set by the United Nations and adopted by AAA as its leading principles. These are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. □

Honorary guests at Playa Linda Beach Resort


PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The symbolic honorary Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively.

Today I had the great pleasure to honor the lovely couple Mr. Harold & Deborah Gray, Ms. Laurissa Coombs, & Ms. Serena Eskridge all coming to Aruba for over 20 years!

This lovely group of wonderful people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its safety, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom have become like family to them.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Playa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □





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SETAR

Attractions and Sightseeing locations in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — There are enough sightseeing locations on the island to fill up a month-long vacation. Aruba's beaches are a big attraction, and although it's great to spend long days just relaxing on the beach and listening to the ocean, there are also plenty of opportunities to get to know Aruba's most attractive sights, historical and natural attractions, and museums. Check out these attractions you don't want to miss!

Blue Horses in Downtown, Oranjestad

This series of 8 sculptures were created by native Aruban artist Osaira Muyale. She named the project Paarden Baai, which translates to "Horse Bay". The statues were installed in 2015 and pay homage to the rich history of Aruba's horse trading industry. In the 17th Century Aruba was used by many countries (Europe, South America, Caribbean islands, and the Mediterranean) as a trading post. The most popular being cattle and horse trading. Horses were once the most important sources of livelihood for Aruba.

For 4 centuries the horse and cattle trade ran strong. At any given time Aruba was home to herds of thousands of horses that roamed the island. Aruba being the perfect trading post encouraged an extremely diverse culture and is the reason almost all Arubans speak more than 1 or 2 languages.

Each of the 8 bright royal blue horses is unique and carries its own name and personality. Pictured above is the mare Sinforosa, but you can also find Saturnina, Escapia, Rosalina, Eufrosina, Am-



brozio, Bonifacia, and Celestina. The sculptures embody strength, nobility, grace, beauty and freedom. They represent the historical moment where the horses jumped from the ship decks into the Caribbean and swam to the Aruban Bay.

When you visit Aruba be sure to explore downtown Oranjestad and try to find all 8!

The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and

parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas.

A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located roadside and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location.

Bubali Bird Sanctuary

Watch more than 80 species of migratory birds from the Bubali watch tower, overlooking their resting and breeding area. The observation tower allows birdwatchers to get a true birds' eye view. Migratory birds, looking for lush vegetation in which to nest, find an oasis within the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. The nearby water treatment facility empties into two inter-connected man-made bird ponds. Birds that inhabit the sanctuary include herons, egrets, gulls, skimmers, coots, ducks and more. Located within walking distance of the Palm Beach resorts, the Bubali Bird Sanctuary offers some unique bird watching opportunities. You can't miss it as it is located just in front of the historical Old Dutch Windmill. Make sure to bring your camera as many of these birds will randomly fly by the observation tower giving a little show. This is a great place to bring kids for a unique and possibly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be so close to the untamed. The happiest island in the Caribbean is so much more than just sun, sand and sea. ☐



Millennial Money: Should you take money advice from Reddit?

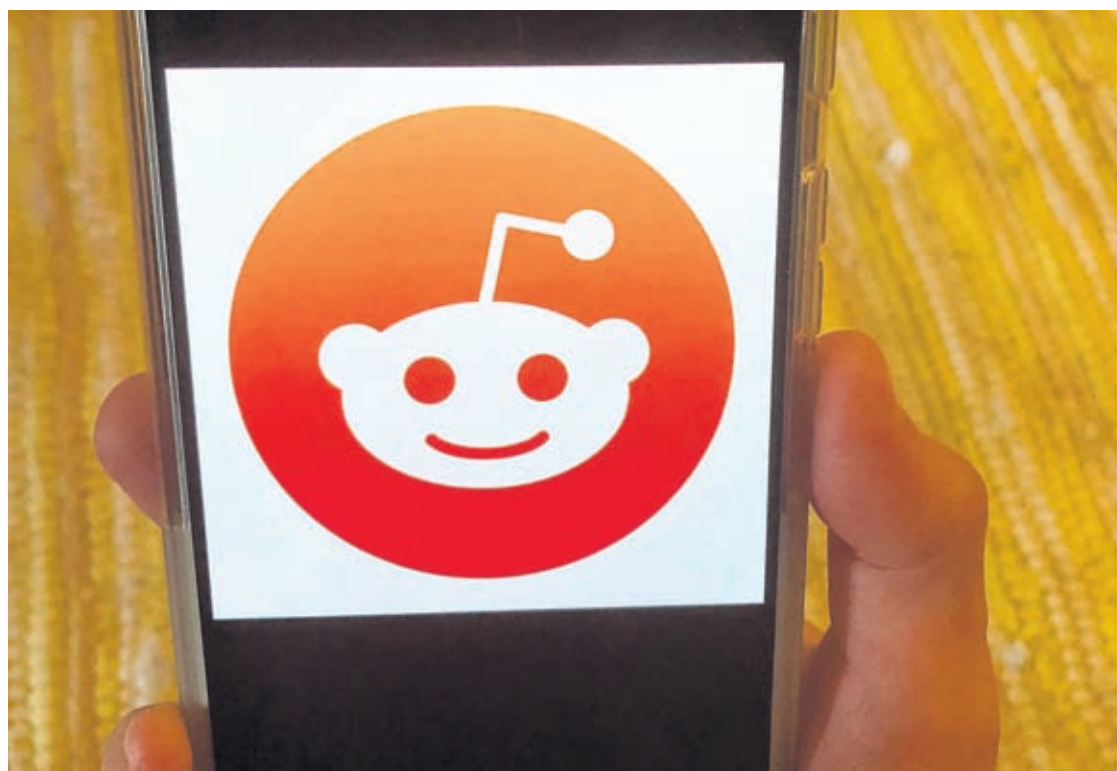
By **LAURA MCMULLEN** of **NerdWallet**

Should you take money advice from a stranger on the internet? In Reddit's r/personalfinance channel, anonymous users exchange tips on buying homes, choosing insurance plans and managing very personal, nuanced money situations. (Think: "How do I handle my dying dad's debts?")

"It's like crowdsourcing financial advice," says Dana Eble, a public relations specialist based in Detroit, who regularly browses r/personalfinance.

If you're not a "Redditor" like Eble, think of the site like an old-school online forum. After signing up for free, you can share text, links and photos with an anonymous username. You can also upvote, downvote or reply to other people's content. Posts and replies with the most upvotes rise to the top. Reddit is organized by communities, called subreddits, based on interest. The r/personalfinance subreddit is home to 14.6 million members. Here's what to consider if you're one of those millions.

HOW REDDIT CAN MOTIVATE AND ENCOURAGE



This June 29, 2020 file photo shows the Reddit logo on a mobile device in New York. The r/personalfinance subreddit has 14.6 million members, many of whom share and request money advice. Associated Press

Being active and intentional with money helps you make the most of it. But for many, money is confusing to manage and uncomfortable to discuss. Scrolling through other people's questions, problems and advice can make the topic feel more normal and less scary.

The subreddit can even be motivating, particularly for those just starting to think

about financial decisions, says Logan Murray, a Tempe, Arizona-based certified financial planner.

"Seeing peers move on with their finances may encourage you to do the same," he says. "It can get the wheels turning."

Murray also likes r/personalfinance for exchanging ideas, like brainstorming passive-income opportunities. With this strategy, he

says, "people can choose what resonates with them." Millions of people sharing their money experiences may also help you feel less alone. After all, Eble says, the r/personalfinance subreddit is a positive community with "no shaming."

She remembers the post of a distraught and embarrassed 20-something who had accumulated tons of debt and had to file for

bankruptcy. The top reply was from someone saying how they had to do the same in their 20s and that it will be OK.

AS FOR THE ADVICE — IT'S A 'MIXED BAG'

The r/personalfinance "Wiki" page is on Reddit but separate from the forum. It's stuffed with useful, sound guidance on topics like how to budget and much more. Eble consulted it as she began building her emergency fund and learning about 401(k)s.

As for the posts and replies, the quality of advice is a "mixed bag," says Jeff Ledford of Arlington, Virginia. He frequently browses and replies to r/personalfinance posts and is also a certified government financial manager. Ledford says some posters must be professionals because their tips are "spot on." But "there's also a lot of advice out there that's better off ignored."

Curtis Bailey, a Cincinnati-based CFP, has also seen solid advice on the r/personalfinance subreddit, particularly when it comes to basics like managing debt and cash flow. But he's also seen misinformation, about taxes, for example. □

American Airlines cutting flights as summer season starts

By **DAVID KOENIG**

DALLAS (AP) — American Airlines will cut hundreds of flights over the next three weeks to avoid overloading its operation as demand for summer air travel rises faster than once expected.

Spokeswoman Sarah Jantz said Tuesday that the cuts could average 50 to 60 flights a day the rest of June and between 50 and 80 a day in the first half of July. That is potentially more than 1% of its schedule.

On Tuesday, the airline had scrubbed 130 flights and more than 200 others were delayed by afternoon Central time, according to tracking service FlightAware.

Jantz said the cuts are "building in additional resilience and certainty to our

operation." She said American is making the most cuts on routes where it has multiple flights to provide backup options for rebooking passengers on other planes.

Leisure travel is picking up as more Americans get vaccinated against COVID-19 and states continue to ease travel restrictions. More than 2 million travelers passed through airport security checkpoints Sunday and again Monday, with Sunday's crowds marking the highest number in 15 months, although still below 2019 levels.

American and other U.S. airlines have been barred from furloughing workers during the pandemic as a condition of billions they received in federal aid to help cover payrolls. How-

ever, American encouraged thousands of workers to quit or retire and now finds itself with a smaller staff as travel demand approaches pre-pandemic levels.

Jantz said American has employees on reserve, but bad weather at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport and Charlotte Douglas International Airport in North Carolina can cause crews to exceed federal limits on how long they can work. She said the airline is also affected by labor shortages at vendors that provide catering drivers and people who push wheelchairs. The cutbacks come after American moved aggressively to restore service that was cut during the pandemic. American had scheduled around 5,800



This June 2, 2021 photo shows an American Airlines aircraft at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington, Va. Associated Press

flights a day through July, about 87% of its schedule for the same period in 2019, according to data from aviation researcher Cirium. The airline industry's difficulties this month haven't been limited to American, which is based in Fort Worth, Tex-

as. Last week, technology problems caused Dallas-based Southwest Airlines to delay several thousand flights and cancel hundreds more. More than 400 Southwest flights were running behind on Tuesday, according to FlightAware. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 44 Long-

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bers seabird

5 Terre 45 Helper:
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river

11 Biz bigwig **DOWN**

12 Broad way 1 Profound

13 Different 2 Wheel

14 Make bar

15 Parrot or 3 Precedent

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16 Disease 5 Tall boot

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17 Trial 7 Roof

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20 Golden flap

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21 Lyric 36 Pro votes

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22 Trojan amount

War hero 38 Janitor's

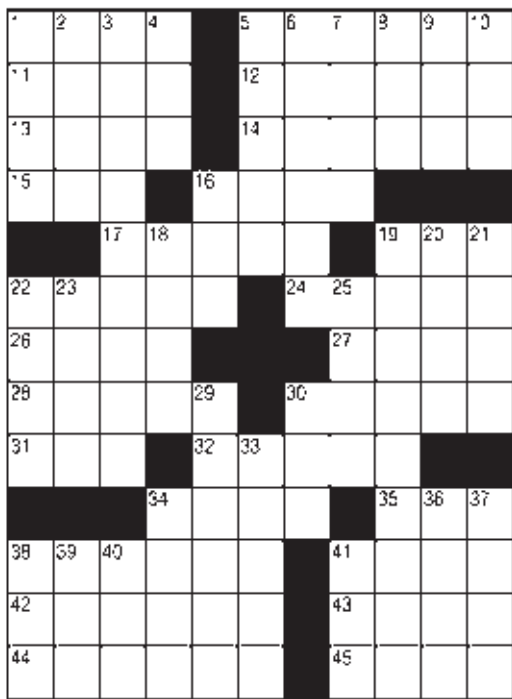
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6-23

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-23 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

JZ LQZ LWW EXQOLW CROBW

OUZ YBQIO SBII LRA OUZ

IZGXRA TWLII XY JBRZ

ZACIQAX TLWZLRX

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I TRY TO GIVE PEOPLE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THEIR SURROUNDINGS. THAT'S ART TO ME. — MAYA LIN

How Big Tech created a data 'treasure trove' for police



This Aug. 11, 2019, file photo an iPhone displays the apps for Facebook and Messenger in New Orleans.

Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) —

When U.S. law enforcement officials need to cast a wide net for information, they're increasingly turning to the vast digital ponds of personal data created by Big Tech companies via the devices and online services that have hooked billions of people around the world.

Data compiled by four of the biggest tech companies shows that law enforcement requests for user information — phone calls, emails, texts, photos, shopping histories, driving routes and more — have more than tripled in the U.S. since 2015. Police are also increasingly savvy about covering their tracks so as not to alert suspects of their interest.

That's the backdrop for recent revelations that the Trump-era U.S. Justice Department sought data from Apple, Microsoft and Google about members of Congress, their aides and news reporters in leak investigations — then pursued court orders that blocked those companies from informing their targets.

In just the first half of 2020 — the most recent data available — Apple, Google, Facebook and Microsoft together fielded more than 112,000 data requests from local, state and federal officials. The companies agreed to hand over some data in 85% of those cases. Facebook, including its Instagram service, accounted for the largest number

of disclosures.

Consider Newport, Rhode Island, a coastal city of 24,000 residents that attracts a flood of summer tourists. Fewer than 100 officers patrol the city — but they make multiple requests a week for online data from tech companies. That's because most crimes — from larceny and financial scams to a recent fatal house party stabbing at a vacation rental booked online — can be at least partly traced on the internet. Tech providers, especially social media platforms, offer a "treasure trove of information" that can help solve them, said Lt. Robert Salter, a supervising police detective in Newport.

"Everything happens on Facebook," Salter said. "The amount of information you can get from people's conversations online — it's insane."

As ordinary people have become increasingly dependent on Big Tech services to help manage their lives, American law enforcement officials have grown far more savvy about technology than they were five or six years

ago, said Cindy Cohn, executive director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights group. That's created what Cohn calls "the golden age of government surveillance." Not only has it become far easier for police to trace the online trails left by suspects, they can also frequently hide their requests by obtaining gag orders from judges and magistrates. Those orders block Big Tech companies from notifying the target of a subpoena or warrant of law enforcement's interest in their information — contrary to the companies' stated policies.

Of course, there's often a reason for such secrecy, said Andrew Pak, a former federal prosecutor. It helps prevent investigations getting sidetracked because someone learns about it, he said — "the target, perhaps, or someone close to it."

Longstanding opposition to such gag orders has recently resurfaced in the wake of the Trump-era orders. Apple in 2018 shared phone and account data generated by two Democratic members of the House Intelligence Committee, but the politicians didn't find out until May, once a series of gag orders expired. Microsoft also shared data about a congressional aide and had to wait more than two years before telling that person. Brad Smith, Microsoft's president, last week called for an end to the overuse of secret gag orders, arguing in a Washington Post opinion piece that "prosecutors too often are exploiting technology to abuse our fundamental freedoms."

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Should reporters challenge or ignore election disbelievers?

By **DAVID BAUDER**

AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Matt Negrin's campaign to ban "election deniers" from television news failed to achieve his original goal, which was to prevent a significant number of Americans from believing the lie that Donald Trump didn't lose the presidential election to Joe Biden.

Instead, it has provoked a persistent debate over the role of political journalists, along with illustrating how television news and the politicians who depend upon its cameras have changed.

Negrin, a former journalist and now producer at Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," wrote a December column for The Washington Post saying that TV journalists who invite Republicans on the air should begin by asking if they believed Biden won the election. If they don't say yes, the interview should end.

He's aggressively continued the effort on his personal Twitter account, saying mainstream news programs that book officeholders who voted against accepting election results are helping to spread misinformation.

Many in the news business believe that stance goes too far, that a journalist's role is to question ideas and point out inaccuracies or outright fictions, not to pretend they don't exist. Two Sunday morning hosts, Jake Tapper and Chris Wallace, recently revealed themselves as polar opposites on the point.



Chuck Todd appears at the 2018 NBCUniversal Upfront in New York on May 14, 2018, from left, Chris Wallace moderates a debate between Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump at UNLV in Las Vegas on Oct. 19, 2016 and CNN news anchor Jake Tapper at the WarnerMedia Upfront in New York on May 15, 2019. Todd Wallace and Tapper host Sunday morning shows on NBC, FOX News and CNN respectively.

Associated Press

While it's not a formal policy, Tapper said he hasn't booked election deniers on CNN's "State of the Union" and on his weekday show, "The Lead."

"It's a discussion I think everyone in the news media should be having," Tapper told Politico. "Should those who shared the election lie that incited the deadly attack on the Capitol and that continues to erode confidence in our democracy be invited onto our airwaves to continue to spread the Big Lie? Can our viewers count on these politicians to tell the truth about other topics?"

Wallace, of "Fox News Sunday," has said he's willing to talk to all sides and has no rules about the order of questions. "I don't think moral posturing goes well with newsgathering," Wallace said in a statement last month.

When Florida Sen. Rick Scott appeared on his show Feb. 28, Wallace asked whether Biden won the election "fair and square." Absolutely, Scott replied.

Led by Trump, suspicion about the 2020 results has remained, despite elections officials calling it secure and the dismissal of court challenges. A Quinnipiac University poll taken six months after the election found 29% of Americans, and 66% of Republicans surveyed said Biden was

not legitimately elected.

Confronting deniers is not a subject many in the business are eager to address publicly. No one on NBC's "Meet the Press," ABC's "This Week" or CBS' "Face the Nation," for example, would speak to The Associated Press about it.

What would Tim Russert do? The former "Meet the Press" host was the acknowledged king of Sunday morning political talk shows before his death in 2008, and his former producer said Russert believed in exposing ideas that many found repugnant. Russert memorably interviewed former KKK leader David Duke in 1991.

But Betsy Fischer Martin, executive producer of "Meet the Press" from 2002 to 2013, wonders how many such opportunities exist now. In today's climate, many politicians prefer friendly TV venues, like Fox News for conservatives or MSNBC for liberals.

"It's human nature in many ways that you want to pick a program that is going to give you more of a platform than a tough interview," said Fischer Martin, executive director of the Women in Politics Institute at American University. Booking deniers is less of an issue when many don't want to be booked in the first place.

The current "Meet the Press"

moderator, Chuck Todd, alluded to this while writing for Politico in January. A handful of GOP senators make themselves available for interviews, he wrote, but they're few and far between.

Unless they need to reach a broader electorate, many Republican officeholders don't see the point of such faceoffs, said Alex Conant, a GOP consultant and founding partner of Firehouse Strategies in Washington.

"If you're a conservative, the truth is, you don't care too much about liberal voters," Conant said. "They're never going to support you, and there's not much benefit to subjecting yourself to a tough interview."

Frank Sesno, a former CNN Washington bureau chief, lands on the side of interviewing deniers. Yet he wonders whether that would be worthwhile if questions are ignored, talking points spouted or empty fights instigated.

"It's not a question of banning them," said Sesno, professor at George Washington University. "You just don't want them on the air because they're not going to be a good guest."

Some recent interviews prove his point.

ABC News' Terry Moran grew exasperated last month in repeatedly and fruitlessly asking GOP

spokesman Paris Dennard whether he accepted the results of the 2020 election as legitimate. "It's a yes or no question," Moran said. Biden was president, Dennard said. He wouldn't go further. Moran kept trying, asking whether he was scared to answer or didn't believe democracy worked last November.

"You can be an American citizen who can accept the fact that Joe Biden is president as well as being concerned about election integrity," Dennard said.

Todd's May 11 interview with Rep. Dan Crenshaw devolved into a fight when the Texas Republican was asked about his support for an effort to overturn the election. Crenshaw said it was "time to move on" and attacked the "liberal and pro-Democratic media" for continuing to bring up the subject.

"Don't start that," Todd said. "There's nothing lazier than that."

The interview soon ended. "I understand where the 'invite and confront' people are coming from," said Jay Rosen, a New York University professor and author of the PressThink blog. "But in practice, the confrontation with a determined fabulist or denialist rarely works out to the viewer's advantage." Few interviewers have the ability to effectively expose hypocrisy on live television, Negrin said.

Even when a journalist can, politicians will take from the invitation to come on the air a message that they can say whatever they want and will still have a platform.

The online provocateur said that he's been pleased that television producers and hosts are at least thinking about these issues.

"It's been (nearly) six months since the insurrection, eight months since the election, and I think a lot of hosts just want to get back to normal — interviewing Republicans, interviewing Democrats," Negrin said. "That's what they do."

"But, to me, it's important to remember what happened."q

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Chinese swimmer Sun Yang banned again, misses Tokyo Olympics

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR**

AP Sports Writer

GENEVA (AP) — China's most famous swimmer got a second chance to avoid a doping ban and compete at the Tokyo Olympics, and lost.

This time, however, Sun Yang's ban is less likely to end the three-time Olympic champion's career.

A new panel of judges at the Court of Arbitration for Sport banned the 29-year-old Sun on Tuesday for 4 years, 3 months — about half the eight-year sanction handed down after the first trial in 2019.

The verdict ended Sun's hopes of defending his Olympic title in the 200-meter freestyle in Tokyo next month. But the ban was backdated to February 2020, meaning Sun could return for the 2024 Paris Olympics when he would be 32.

The judges found Sun "to have acted recklessly" when he refused to let anti-doping officials leave his home with a sample of his blood. The formal charges were for refusing to give a sample and tampering with a doping control.

Sun denied wrongdoing and his original eight-year ban imposed last year



In this Tuesday, July 23, 2019 file photo, China's Sun Yang celebrates after winning the men's 200m freestyle final at the World Swimming Championships in Gwangju, South Korea.

Associated Press

was overturned on appeal to Switzerland's supreme court, which ordered a fresh trial.

Federal judges ruled the first guilty verdict was tainted because the chairman of that three-person panel at CAS showed anti-Chinese bias in social media comments.

The retrial was heard by different judges by video

over three days last month and fast-tracked ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, which open on July 23.

For the retrial, Sun's Geneva-based legal team was aided by lawyers who successfully represented Russia's anti-doping agency and athletes in previous CAS hearings about doping violations.

Sun's case centered on

a failed attempt to take blood and urine from the swimmer by a sample collection team who made an unannounced visit to his home in China in September 2018.

It turned confrontational after midnight when he questioned the officials' credentials. It led to Sun's entourage ordering a security guard to smash the

casing of a blood vial with a hammer so that it would not be valid for testing.

The World Anti-Doping Agency appealed to CAS when a tribunal appointed by swimming governing body FINA only warned the Olympic champion about his conduct.

WADA requested a ban of two-to-eight years for a second doping conviction. Sun served a three-month ban in 2014 imposed by Chinese authorities after testing positive for a stimulant that was banned at the time. The ban was not announced until after it ended.

WADA welcomed the latest CAS ruling on Tuesday, noting that its concerns about FINA's inconsistent interpretation of anti-doping rules were upheld again.

"The decision by the Swiss Federal Tribunal to set aside the (original) CAS award was limited to a challenge made against the chair of the CAS panel and had nothing to do with the substance of this case," WADA director general Olivier Niggli said.

Sun's eight-year ban had been imposed after a rare CAS hearing held in open court and streamed live online. □

AP source: Middleton, Holiday, Love commit to Tokyo Games

By **TIM REYNOLDS**

AP Basketball Writer

Jrue Holiday is planning to try to follow in his wife's footsteps and win an Olympic gold medal.

Holiday has committed to USA Basketball for next month's Tokyo Games, along with his Milwaukee teammate Khris Middleton and Cleveland forward Kevin Love, said to a person with knowledge of the decisions.

Holiday and Middleton are planning to play at this point even if the Bucks make the NBA Finals, the person said. The person spoke to The Associated Press Tuesday on condition of anonymity because the team has not yet publicly released the roster.

It would be the first Olym-

pics for Holiday and Middleton, and the second for Love — who was on the U.S. team that won gold at the 2012 London Games. Another gold medalist from 2012 was the player then known as Lauren Cheney, who won her second consecutive Olympic gold as part of the U.S. women's soccer team. She's now known as Lauren Holiday, after marrying Jrue in 2013. And now, it's her husband who is pursuing the gold medal.

Jrue Holiday was part of the select team that helped the 2012 team prepare for the Olympics, and has been part of other USA Basketball experiences along the way — but never anything as significant as the chance to play in

Tokyo.

Middleton was part of the most recent U.S. men's senior national team, playing for coach Gregg Popovich — who'll also lead the Olympic team — at the 2019 Basketball World Cup in China, where the Americans were a disappointing seventh.

The additions of Middleton, Holiday and Love put the Americans relatively close to having a full roster for the Tokyo Games. Others who have committed so far: Miami's Bam Adebayo, Brooklyn's Kevin Durant, Golden State's Draymond Green, Washington's Bradley Beal, Boston's Jayson Tatum, Phoenix's Devin Booker and Portland's Damian Lillard.

Brooklyn's James Harden



Milwaukee Bucks' Jrue Holiday drives past Brooklyn Nets' Landry Shamet during the first half of Game 3 of the NBA Eastern Conference basketball semifinals game Thursday, June 10, 2021, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

also intends to play and has made that commitment to USA Basketball, though there is concern over whether his hamstring injury — which sidelined and slowed him at times

during the Nets' postseason run — will actually allow him to be part of the team.

The Americans start training camp in Las Vegas on July 6. □

Torrey Pines deserves another Open for men and women

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Torrey Pines now has staged two U.S. Opens, and it would be hard to find any flaws.

The public course along the Pacific bluffs gave us Tiger Woods going 91 holes over five days on one good leg to win his third U.S. Open, and Jon Rahm returning to No. 1 in the world after becoming the first player in the 126-year history of the Open to birdie the last two holes in a one-shot victory. Until next time, Torrey Pines. Except in this case, until when?

The next opening on the U.S. Open schedule is 2028 and seven years seems too soon. Plus, the USGA is moving toward a rotation of five courses — Pebble Beach, Oakmont, Shinnecock Hills, Pinehurst No. 2 and Winged Foot — with room for other courses sprinkled into the mix.

Is there room for Torrey Pines? There should be.

Before the week started, there was a feeling this might be the last Open at Torrey Pines for some time — if ever — especially with Los Angeles Country Club giving the USGA another California course in 2023.

Another question: Would the U.S. Open even have returned had Woods missed that 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole in 2008 to force a playoff, or if Rocco Mediate had made his birdie putt from 20 feet on the 18th hole in the playoff?

"Having the champions you want helps," said David Fay, the executive director of the USGA when Torrey first was awarded a U.S. Open. It was Fay's idea to go to Bethpage Black in 2002, the first truly public course to host the U.S. Open, and it was a huge hit. Woods, the only player to finish un-



Jon Rahm, of Spain, reacts to his putt on the 17th green during the final round of the U.S. Open Golf Championship, Sunday, June 20, 2021, at Torrey Pines Golf Course in San Diego.

Associated Press

der par, won a duel against Phil Mickelson on the back nine.

"If that had flopped, they would have sacked me right away," Fay said with a laugh.

It was no coincidence that three months after Woods won at Bethpage, the USGA awarded the 2008 U.S. Open to another public course, Torrey Pines. Two more daily-fee courses, Chambers Bay south of Seattle in 2015 and Erin Hills in Wisconsin in 2017, were added to the schedule. Bethpage only had to wait seven years for another U.S. Open.

That one flopped.

A rain-soaked mess kept

the U.S. Open from ending in regulation until Monday, barely, with Lucas Glover winning his only major. Bethpage Black now is aligned with the PGA of America — a PGA Championship two years ago, the Ryder Cup in 2025 — and it hosted a pair of PGA Tour postseason events.

Torrey hasn't disappointed. Not in January for the Farmers Insurance Open. Not in June for the U.S. Open. The ultimate backhanded compliment is to suggest not even the USGA can mess up a U.S. Open at Torrey Pines. It was the ideal test in 2008 when Woods and Mediate were the only players to finish under par,

and it was equally strong this year.

No gimmicks. No secrets. With dry weather, the fairways were fast enough they didn't have to be overly narrow. The greens were firm without bringing back ugly memories of Shinnecock Hills in 2004 and 2018.

Mickelson even approved, strong praise considering his beefs with the USGA.

"I'm very surprised that in the 30 years that I've played the U.S. Open, this is the best I've seen," Mickelson said. "I thought they did a remarkable job, and I'm really proud and happy that it's here at Torrey. I think this afternoon is going to be awesome."

"It's going to be a good finish."

He got that part right. Ten players were separated by one shot at one point when the final group was on the front nine. Separation came from bad decisions, bad lies, bad shots,

typical of a U.S. Open. Four players who were within one or two shots of the lead made double bogey on the back nine. The winner, Rahm, was the only player to not drop a shot on the back nine.

The USGA still has to decide the fate of Chambers Bay, which had the champion it wanted (Jordan Spieth), but not in the manner he won. Dustin Johnson went from a 12-foot eagle putt for the win to a three-putt bogey to lose because of greens that barely had any grass.

Even if Torrey Pines has to wait 13 years, it deserves a third U.S. Open.

Torrey is in the spotlight every January for a PGA Tour stop that plays just as tough as a U.S. Open except the turf is softer.

Patrick Reed shot 210 in his three rounds on the South Course during the Farmers Insurance Open. The low 54-hole score for the U.S. Open this year was 208.

Plus, it typically is the weekend between the NFL conference title games and the Super Bowl. Golf fans know Torrey, even if the hang gliders are as memorable as some of the holes. But there's a chance for the USGA to return to Torrey with another championship.

Two weeks before the return to Torrey Pines, the U.S. Women's Open was at Olympic Club in San Francisco, which previously hosted five U.S. Opens. Nothing adds to prestige than history, and Olympic is just a start.

The Women's Open will be at Pebble Beach for the first time in 2023, and the championship is booked through 2025. That's when the USGA needs to consider only traditional men's venues for the women.

Winged Foot is said to be under consideration for a Women's Open. Pine Needles gets the Women's Open next year, but future trips to North Carolina likely will be at Pinehurst No. 2.

Torrey Pines would be ideal for the Women's Open. It tends to put on a pretty good show. □



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